



pRide



APRIL 1996

THE NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR

RHODE ISLAND STATE EMPLOYEES

RETIRED (SORT OF) STATE WORKER EARNS THREE DEGREES — RETURNS TO WORK (SORT OF)



Dr. Mary Braga

When Mary Braga retired from state service in 1981, as the then mandatory retirement age of 70 neared, she had already attained what many would consider, a lifetime of achievements.

The youngest of five children, Mary came with her parents to the United States from the Azores in 1916 at the age of 4. After grammar school and two years of accelerated business courses, she took a \$10.00-a-week job. She was 16; the year was 1928, the eve of the Great Depression.

Years later, she became a fiscal-budget officer in what was the Workmen's Compensation Division of the Department of Labor, and retired at age 69 with 40 years of service.

At an age when most retirees are thinking of hitting the road in an RV, or heading for Florida for a life of ease in sun and condo, Mary headed for college.

A niece who had returned to school, urged Mary to try college. Mary had taken accounting courses, and taught stenographic typing. She had also earned a General Education Diploma. But she remained skeptical about her ability to cope with college. All of her prior education and work experience was business related. And she was very apologetic about the gaps in her education. Nevertheless, she agreed to give it a try. And so in 1981, at the age of 69, Mary Braga began her college career at URI College of Continuing Education.

With the help of her professors, her original fears were allayed, and her self-deprecation soon ended.

She went to England in 1982, and participated in a URI program that allowed students to study literature in the land where it was written.

She minored in Spanish, and studied in Salamanca, Spain in the summers of 1984 and 1985; and England lured her back for more study in 1983, 1989 and 1991.

Mary earned her bachelor's degree in 1986, and continued on at URI to earn a master's degree in 1991. But the apex of her college education was reached last year, when, just a month shy of her 83rd birthday, she received her Ph.D. degree in 19th Century English Literature from URI. In the process, she also became the oldest person ever to earn a doctorate from the University of Rhode Island.

Doctor Braga has been lauded by her professors for her determination and yearning for in-depth knowledge for its own sake.

"She is" said one professor, "simply the most determined graduate student I've ever met."

Looking back over the years at URI, Miss Braga said, "Psychologically, going to school is the best thing in the world. There's so much to learn."

"Retirement," she says, "always seems to mean an ending, but for me, it was a beginning."

Mary Braga never made a secret of the fact that she prefers working over retirement.

"The best years of your life are your working years," she insists.

"You look back and say to yourself, 'It ended so quickly'."

She loved work, and returned to her job each year under the 75-day rule, now revoked. Now, she is back again! Back in state service—this time as a volunteer.

Over the years, she has worked as a volunteer at Miriam Hospital, Women & Infants Hospital, and for Jewish Family Services.

Now she has been recruited by the Division of Human Resources, and is currently working on a special project sponsored by the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor called the **Working Women Count Honor Roll**. Described as "a new initiative to recognize employers, organizations, and others who implement policies and practices that value the work women do," the local project comes under the jurisdiction of the Rhode Island Commission on Women.

In 1995, Dr. Braga pledged \$10,000 to URI's Capital Campaign. Her pledge, made in installments over five years, will establish a scholarship for a female undergraduate of Portuguese descent.

(continued on page 4)

U.S. SAVINGS BOND DRIVE SET FOR APRIL 1 - MAY 31

Governor Lincoln Almond has appointed **General Reginald A. Centracchio** Campaign Chairman for the 1996 U.S. Savings Bond drive.

The annual campaign enables state workers to buy bonds through systematic payroll deductions.

Series EE bonds are available in \$100 up to \$1000 denominations, at **one-half** their face value. They are **free from State and local income tax**, and federal income tax can be deferred until you cash the bonds or they stop drawing interest in 30 years, whichever occurs first.

Savings bonds may also hold even greater tax advantages for taxpayers interested in saving for a child's education, their own, or that of a spouse.

Department representatives will be coordinating the 1996 drive along with campaign advisors **Susan Jay**, 457-4113; **Fran Cirillo**, 277-6699; and **Jack Foley**, Area Manager, Department of the Treasury, U.S. Savings Bonds—617-565-6100. For more information, contact your department payroll officer or one of the campaign advisors listed above.



96-1 1-19-96

Establishes panel to address transportation infrastructure capital funding.

96-2 1-21-96

Declares state of disaster emergency due to oil spill.

96-2.1 1-30-96

Terminates state of disaster emergency declared by EO 96-2.

96-3 2-1-96

Establishes a central clearinghouse for state claims in connection with North Cape/Scandia oil spill.

96-4 3-13-96

Creates the Governor's Commission on Dredging.

For more information or copies of Executive Orders, call the **Office of the Executive Counsel, 277-2080, Ext. 258.**

O.T.D.

Office of Training and Development Spring Courses

April

- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Intermediate Lotus 1-2-3
- Introduction to Word Perfect 6.0
- Keys to Clerical Success
- Speedwriting II: Building Speed
- Telephone Techniques
- Transference & Countertransference Issues in Psychotherapy

May

- Assessment & Treatment of Sexual Addictions
- CPR
- Guardianships and Alternatives
- Intermediate DOS
- Intermediate Lotus 1-2-3
- Intermediate Word Perfect 5.1
- Intermediate Word Perfect 6.0
- Recognizing and Responding to Elder Maltreatment
- Self-Defense for Women
- The Americans with Disabilities Act
- The Subdivision Review Act of 1992
- Using Lotus 1-2-3

FOR MORE INFORMATION call the Office of Training and Development (OTD) at 277-2877. For hearing impaired TDD 277-6144.

SECA CELEBRATES SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

State workers gathered at the State House on March 13, to celebrate another successful State Employees Charitable Appeal (SECA) campaign.

DET director **Larry Fitch**, chairperson of the 1995 appeal, announced that \$625,563 was raised to help, "Continue Building Our Community Through Caring" (the 1995 campaign theme). Total dollars raised is a 2% increase over the previous year, and over 350 non-profit agencies received designations from state donors.

Governor Lincoln Almond lauded state employees for their support and generosity. "Without it" said the governor, "the future would be a little less bright for the people who depend on the various services offered by SECA agencies."

Outstanding Campaign Awards (based on per capita giving) were presented to the following agencies (the names of key volunteers are included):

Largest Agency: **Department of Employment and Training (Bill Brock, Helen Harnett, Nancy Olson)**. Mid-size Agencies (tie): **Department of Labor/Workers Compensation (Matt Carey)**; **Department of Business Regulations (Martha McVeigh)**. Smaller Agencies: **Office of Higher Education (Kent Gates)**. Smallest Agency: **Mental Health Advocate (H. Reed Cosper)**. Most Improved Campaign: **Department of Corrections (John Mancini)**.

Honorable Mentions went to: **Atomic Energy Commission; Child Advocate's Office; Department of Library Services; Department of Transportation; Governor's Office; Office of the Attorney General; Office of the General Treasurer; Office of the Secretary of State; Public Utilities Commission; State Police; Superior Court; Supreme Court; and Water Resources Board.**

The Hope Award for the Best Overall Campaign, a tie, went to the **Department of Health** and the **Department of Employment and Training**.

Chairman Citations (for exceptional personal effort and commitment to the 1995 campaign) were awarded to: **Theresa Bernier**, Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission; **Grace Bruzzese**, Department of Employment & Training

(retired); **Jonn Garrick**, Department of Environmental Management; **Louis Joseph**, Department of Mental Health, Retardation & Hospitals; **Robert Melucci**, State Court System; **Gordon Roberts**, State Police; and **Sol Solomon**, Community College of Rhode Island.

In related news, **Dr. Patricia Nolan**, director of the Department of Health, will chair the 1996 SECA campaign. Volunteers wishing to help plan the appeal, or nonprofit agencies wishing an application for inclusion, should contact Kelly Stebbins, SECA director, at (401)444-0614.

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Deadline for contributions to the June issue is May 1, 1996.

The State of Rhode Island is an equal opportunity employer and reasonable accommodations will be provided. For assistance, call EEO Office at 277-3999. (TDD 277-6144).

BILLS ON THE HILL



Pending Legislation of Interest to State Workers

Editor's Note: Numerous bills affecting state workers were reviewed for this column. The following are considered the most significant.

SENATE BILLS

96-S-2587 and 96-H 7827—Establishes a medical savings account pilot program for state employees.

96-S-2610 and 96-H-8535—Repeals a provision of the retirement statute that allows the selection of multiple beneficiaries to receive lifetime annuity benefits upon the death of a member of the system. The repeal would allow for the selection of only one beneficiary.

96-S-2783—Repeals pertinent remaining provisions of the general laws granting service credits to members of the state retirement system for other than actual state service.

96-S-2817—Includes school committee members with city or town council members as being entitled to retirement service credits.

96-S-2870—Reduces the benefits payable to a member of the state retirement system to the extent of any contributions made by that member to a tax-sheltered annuity.

96-S-2920 and 96-H-8510—The Personnel Reform Act of 1996, the Governor's early retirement incentive bill.

96-S-2977—Transfers to the Retirement Board the power to appoint legal counsel to the board and establish and maintain accounts and statistical

records previously held by the General Treasurer.

96-S-3031 and 96-H-8715—Establishes the R.I. State Government Pay Equity Act for equitable compensation for male and female state workers.

HOUSE BILLS

96-H-7225—Provides that all new appointees of the Cranston police and fire departments, as a condition of employment, shall become members of the state retirement systems, and gives to those police officers and fire fighters with five years or less of service to the city of Cranston, the option of becoming members of the state retirement system.

96-H-7433—Would allow only one spouse eligible for family medical and dental coverage when both spouses are employees of the state. In the event of the death of the policy-holder, the survivor would be immediately eligible for coverage.

96-H-7437—Requires persons purchasing service credits in the retirement system to pay full actuarial value and accrued interest for the purchase of such credits, and defines "full actuarial value" for the purposes of the act.

96-H-7917—Amends the definition of "teacher" for the purposes of the teacher retirement law.

96-H-7960—Would afford retired state employees who are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces the same health plan benefits provided to state employees.

96-H-8139—Prevents retired state employees from collecting a state pension while working for a city or town.

96-H-8145—Makes numerous technical amendments to the State Merit System, and in effect, creates the State Merit System Act of 1996.

96-H-8163—Allows members of the state retirement system to be members of the retirement system of any union and remain eligible to participate in and receive benefits of state retirement.

96-H-8188—Includes mutual funds as authorized deferred compensation plans for the state or any city, town or other political subdivision.

96-H-8399—Allows the purchase of armed service credits without regard as to whether those credits count as service credits in any other retirement system in which the member is vested or from which the member is receiving a pension.

96-H-8552—Requires that an unresolved public employment contract be resolved by a binding judicial process.

96-H-8579—Adds two members to the composition of the retirement board: one to represent retired teachers, and one to represent retired workers.

INFORMATION ON LEGISLATION MAY BE OBTAINED BY THE FOLLOWING MEANS:

BY TELEPHONE

For status of bills
Legislative Hotline 751-8833
1-800-547-8800

For copies of legislation
Library Services 277-2473

For information on legislative hearings
Secretary of State Office of Public Information 277-2357

BY FAX MACHINE

Fax Back 277-1308

BY COMPUTER

Legis BBS 277-2910

Access by PC with modem and communications software provides information on committee hearings, schedules, House and Senate calendar, committee membership, etc.

Access also available on
Worldwide Web
<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us>
or
<http://www.state.ri.us>

pRide in performance



RI Supreme Court personnel led by **Elaine Dorazio** aided by **Kathy Ryan** and **Claire Blue**, donated 150 gifts of clothing to the *Bundle-Up RI* campaign for children in need. Holiday packages were de-

livered to the RI Mall and distributed, Santa style, to children at various RI community agencies. This is the third, and most successful, year in which Court personnel took part in the campaign.

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Fiscal Management Officer **Susan Jay** and Employee Services Aide **Frances Cirillo** received the "Award for Patriotic Service" from the Secretary of the Treasury for their work, "In support of U.S. Savings

Bonds." The two are U.S. Savings Bonds Campaign Advisors. In the accompanying photo left to right are **Carol Grant**, Vice President, NYNEX, 1996 U.S. Savings Bond Campaign Chairperson; **Jay** and **Cirillo**, and **Ted Langlois**, Deputy Executive Director, Department of the Treasury, Savings Bond Marketing.

* * *



The 1995 DEM team ready to "Walk the Walk".

For the second year, DEM employees, their families and friends, will take part in RI Project/AIDS' annual Walk for Life in Providence on June 2; and they are CHALLENGING other state agencies to form their own team and to join

them in the annual fund raiser. The 10 kilometer walk around the East Side of Providence begins with registration at India Point Park at 8:00 a.m. followed by the walk beginning at 10:00 a.m. The walk is followed by a free lunch and entertainment for all participants. For more information, call **Bill Patenaude** or **Jean Lambert** at DEM's Division of Water Resources, 277-3961, ext. 7264 or 7244, or call RI Project/AIDS at 831-5595.

RETIRED STATE WORKER

(continued from page 1)

She was inspired to make this pledge and establish a scholarship upon hearing about the generosity of Osceola McCarty, 87, of Hattiesburg, Mississippi who, through a lifetime of labor, incredibly accumulated \$150,000 and in 1995, donated it to the University of Southern Mississippi for scholarships for the area's African-American students.

Dr. Braga's parents and siblings are dead, and the Portuguese they use to speak at home has gone with them, so she recently audited a Portuguese language course in an attempt to regain her fluency.

At the urging of her college professors and others, this busy lady has undertaken to write her autobiography, and is working with URI Professor Sharon Strom on this project.

One who encouraged Mary to write her autobiography is Professor Wilfred Dvorak, her dissertation advisor. Said Dvorak, "She will be an inspiration for us all, recounting a very important period in the history of emigration from the Azores to Rhode Island."

Perhaps Angela Muno, director of advancement for the College of Arts and Science, summed-it-up best when she said of Mary's incredible achievements, "Mary is not only a lifelong learner, she has also become a teacher. She teaches us all lessons about persistence, commitment and generosity."

Attention Department Directors. Please turn in your Working Women Count Honor Roll pledges.

BITS 'N PIECES



RIDOT retirees, L to R, Pat Natale, Ed Burnett, Bob Graziano and Rocco Cioffi.

RIDOT employees **Edward Burnett**, **Rocco Cioffi**, **Robert Graziano** and **Pat Natale** were guests at a dinner party given in their honor where RIDOT Chief Engineer **James Capaldi** presented them with the Gov-

ernor's Citation for Meritorious Service. The retirees were treated to limousine service to the event; received mementos of their career, and dined at tables decorated with unusual floral pieces in the shape of DOT dump trucks and cement mixers.



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